

Final Report to the Steering Committee of the
Iowa Supreme Court Commission on Planning for the
21st Century

*Public Awareness and Assessments
of the Courts in Iowa*

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Executive Summary

As part of the activities of the Supreme Court Commission on Planning for the 21st Century, The University of Iowa Social Science Institute was commissioned to conduct a public opinion survey with a representative cross section of adult Iowa citizens. The 803 completed interviews form the empirical basis for the report that follows. The substantive topics covered by the survey fall into three general categories: knowledge of the courts, experience with the courts and evaluations of the courts in Iowa. A brief summary of the key findings are presented below.

I. Knowledge of the Courts

There is some indication that knowledge of the courts has increased in recent years. In 1981 a comparable survey found that 54 percent of Iowans understood the principle of presumed innocence, the 1995 survey finds that 61 percent know that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty.

In response to a series of questions tapping knowledge about the courts, 43 percent of respondents are found to have a high level of knowledge, 40 percent have a medium level, while only 17 percent have a low level of knowledge.

Television news is the most frequently used source of information about court operations. In the 1995 survey 40 percent of respondents indicated that television news was their most important source of information about the courts, a large increase over the 18 percent found in a comparable 1981 survey.

II. Experience with the Courts

Experience with some aspect of the court system is quite high in Iowa. Roughly one-quarter of Iowans have been a juror on a court case. Nearly half of all Iowans have been to a courthouse to use court services during the past three years. Young people use court services more frequently than older people because they are more likely to be filing for various licenses.

Two-thirds of all adult Iowans have sought legal advice at one time or another, almost all (94%) from private attorneys.

Only 16 percent of the survey respondents have been involved in the use of an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) mechanism such as arbitration or mediation to settle a dispute.

Satisfaction with court and ADR decisions is very high, roughly 70 percent of those involved with the proceedings are satisfied with the outcomes.

III. Evaluations of the Courts

Evaluations of the courts are mixed. The public is more positive toward some components of the justice system, such as the Supreme Court, than towards others, such as lawyers or the prison system. Also, they are more positive about the general principles, such as guaranteeing a fair trial, than the specific details of how the courts operate, such as providing speedy trials or treating all groups equally.

Relative to other state justice institutions, except the state patrol and local police, Iowa courts get overwhelmingly positive evaluations: 75 percent approve of the job the courts are doing.

Yet, slightly less than half of the survey respondents say they trust the courts. While most people think they would be treated fairly by the courts, they also perceive the courts as giving preferential treatment to the rich, powerful and celebrities in society.

Surprisingly, these evaluations of the Iowa courts were not influenced by the O. J. Simpson trial proceedings or the decision in that case.

Most respondents endorsed a number of policy changes aimed at improving court operations, such as increasing the use of ADRs in solving disputes or extending court operations into evening and week-end hours. A majority of survey respondents, however, opposed reducing the number of places where local court services are offered, and replacing judges with computers to handle certain court cases.

Public Awareness and Assessments of The Courts in Iowa

As the third branch of government in the United States the judiciary affects the lives of all citizens. Since the turn of the century the responsibility, authority and size of the court system in the United States have expanded at a rapid pace. Yet, despite the increased power and reach of the courts, it is unclear to what extent the public is aware of the court system, or what channels of communication are used by the average citizen to learn about the courts. Moreover, while a number of reports have pointed to a growing cynicism about the courts, few have looked at the impact that knowledge of, and experience with, the courts has on public evaluations of the courts. This report, sponsored by the Iowa Supreme Court Commission on planning for the 21st Century, focuses on these issues.

The report is comprised of four major sections. The first section considers the extent and sources of knowledge about the courts. This section looks first at what people think of when they think of the "justice system." Next, the degree of general and specific interest that individuals have in following court decisions are explored. Finally, the section examines the sources of information citizens utilize when learning about the courts and the accuracy of their knowledge. The second section of the report then turns to look at the extent and types of direct experience that Iowans have with the courts and various agents of the courts. The third and most extensive section examines evaluations of the court and broader justice system in Iowa. This section starts with a discussion of the types of problems that the public believes face the courts as they move into the 21st century. Next, public approval ratings of the courts and related institutions are examined. In addition, we investigate the extent to which various values and attributes (such as efficient, fair and competent) are associated with the courts by the public. Finally, the report discusses the degree to which the public endorses

various policies that have been suggested as possible future changes in the structure and functioning of the Iowa court system. The fourth and final section of the report, which appears in the Appendix, presents the technical information about how the survey that provides the public opinion evidence for this report, was conducted. Also included in the Appendix is a full set of frequency distributions indicating how the respondents answered each question.

Before turning to the report details, it would be useful to describe briefly the process that led to carrying out a public opinion survey of Iowans' attitudes toward the courts. As part of its mission, the Iowa Supreme Court Commission on Courts in the 21st Century was interested in determining the level of knowledge, experience and evaluations of the Iowa courts among adults in Iowa. This survey was intended to provide a baseline measurement against which future survey results could be compared. One intention of the Commission was to use the survey results to provide some guidelines for possible changes in the functioning of the court system that may increase the efficiency, effectiveness and responsiveness of the courts in the future. Given these intended goals, The Commission contracted with The University of Iowa Social Science Institute (ISSI) to develop an appropriate questionnaire that could be used to interview, by telephone, a representative cross section of 800 Iowa adults (18 years old and older). The questionnaire was developed with input from a number of earlier surveys that had been conducted in other states, suggestions from the Commission, a number of academic sources on public attitudes toward the courts, in addition to several new questions that were drafted by Arthur Miller and Andy Peebler. The interviews were conducted between September 12 and October 6.

The 803 completed interviews have an overall sampling error of ± 3.5 percentage points. This indicates that if the total adult population had been interviewed instead of a sample, the observed findings would, 99 times out of 100, lie within a range of ± 3.5 percentage points from those presented

in this report. This also means that any differences in the responses given by various subgroups (say men compared with women) to a survey question must be greater than 3.5 percentage points to be statistically significant. The reader should be mindful of these requirements for statistical significance as they go through the remainder of the report.

I. Awareness and Knowledge of the Courts in Iowa

One purpose of the study was to determine to what extent Iowans are familiar with the court system, are interested in following court proceedings, and what sources of information people use to gain knowledge of the courts. One way to determine awareness of the courts is to ask an unstructured, open-ended question that would allow the respondents to indicate that they think about the courts, but without the survey itself imposing a particular set of responses on the possible answers. At the outset of the questionnaire, therefore, the respondents were asked “what comes to mind when you think about the justice system?” In response to this open-ended question only 39 percent of the respondents indicated that something in particular came to mind when thinking about the justice system. In short, the justice system is not a topic that is at the forefront of most citizens minds. However, among those respondents who gave a substantive response to the question (see Question 1 in the Appendix), half gave a response that focused on the courts or some court-related feature of the justice system (33% mentioned the courts in general, 6% mentioned the supreme court, 5% mentioned judges, juries or trials and 6% mentioned the O.J. Simpson trial). The other 50 percent of respondents gave comments that either focused on law enforcement agencies (10%) or a series of general criticisms of the justice system (26%) that included comments about the system not working, that it was too slow, with a backlog of cases, and that the outcomes are generally unfair. A small set of respondents (7%) also gave generally positive comments stating that the justice system was fair and worked well. In summary,

when responding to the question about the justice system 60 percent of the respondents gave an answer that focused on some institutional component of the system (courts, law enforcement agencies, etc.), while 40 percent gave answers of an evaluative sort and the preponderance of these open-ended evaluative comments were negative.

Similar to the findings from other state surveys (see Ellers 1992, Judicial Coordinating Committee Report 1981), relatively few Iowa respondents indicated that they were “very interested” in the “working of the state court system.” Only 16 percent of all the survey respondents said they were “very” interested in the state court system while 70 percent and 14 percent said they were “somewhat” or “not at all interested” in the working of the state court system (Q13, p. 33). Moreover, there are only minor differences in the responses to this question when it is examined across different population subgroups (see Table 1). There are virtually no differences by gender, or across education and income categories. For example, 16.7 percent of males and 16.0 percent of females said they were very interested in the workings of the court. On the other hand, older people (55 years old or older) were slightly more interested in court activities than were those aged 18-37 — 21 and 16 percent respectively said they were very interested. Big city residents were also slightly more likely to be very interested than were small town/rural residents (21 and 17% respectively).

A somewhat higher percentage of respondents, however, indicated that they were often interested in following specific court cases (Q19). In response to this question 23 percent said “often”, 45 percent “sometimes”, 25 percent “rarely” and 8 percent “never.” Among those who did follow specific court cases, almost half mentioned the O.J. Simpson trial as the case they followed (for complete responses see Q20a in the Appendix). Furthermore, there was slightly more variation in responses to this question (Q19: following specific cases, p. 35) across population subgroups than was

found for the question regarding general interest in the courts. Big city, older, lower income and female respondents were somewhat more likely to follow specific court cases than were rural, younger, upper income or male respondents (see Table 1). These differences were not large, and may simply reflect who in the population has more time to pay attention to court cases.

A variety of sources of information are available to those who wish to follow court activities or from which individuals may learn about the courts. Some individuals may have more direct interaction with the courts through their own work or through family or friends who work in the court system. In addition, individuals can potentially learn their knowledge about the courts through a variety of sources such as the mass media (especially newspapers, radio and television news or entertainment programs), or courses they have taken in high school or college. Of course, individuals may also learn directly about the court system as either a plaintiff or defendant in a court case, or as a juror. These direct experiences will be discussed in the next section of this report. Here, the focus is on the frequency with which Iowans use various other sources of information for gaining knowledge of the courts.

While nearly half of all respondents (Q51, p.48; 45%) indicate that a family member or friend works to some capacity in the legal system (a figure that rises to 58% among the college educated), only 19 percent of the respondents report that they frequently get information from family members about courts (Q17.8, p.34) and even fewer (15%) seek information from friends frequently (Q17.7, p.34). Similarly, relatively few respondents mentioned high school and college courses or court materials as frequently used sources of information about courts (18 and 12% respectively).

Various mass media sources, on the other hand, are more frequently mentioned as sources of information about the courts than are family or friends. More than four out of ten respondents said they frequently used television news (Q17.4, p.34) and local newspapers (Q17.1, p.34) as sources of

information about the courts (46 and 41% respectively), and 32 percent frequently utilize radio news. Each of these mainstream media sources was more frequently utilized by lower income, lesser educated, older, and female than better educated, higher income, younger or male respondents (see Table 2).

Other possible sources of information asked about in the survey included television entertainment programs such as *L.A. Law*, and the O.J. Simpson trial that was taking place during the interviewing period. The O.J. Simpson trial turned out to be one of the most frequently used sources of information (38% said they used it frequently to get information about the court system), whereas only 15 percent of respondents said that they used TV entertainment programs frequently as a source of information about the courts. Those who mentioned frequently using TV entertainment to learn about the courts were also very likely to mention frequently using the O.J. trial (the correlation between the two survey items is $r = .24$, significant at the $p < .001$ level). There were no statistically significant differences in the frequency of using TV entertainment programs or the O.J. trial by population subgroups. In other words, men and women, young and old, low income and high income respondents were equally as likely to use these sources for information about the courts. The only significant difference was by education level. Those with a high school education or less were more likely than the college educated to use TV entertainment programs and the O.J. trial frequently as a source of information about how the court systems operate. For example, 41 percent of the lesser educated as compared with 31 percent of the college educated reported frequently using the O.J. trial as a source of information (see Table 2).

Although a substantial proportion of the respondents reported “frequently” following the O.J.

Simpson trial, relatively few people saw the trial as their “single most important source of information about the courts” (Q18, p.35). In response to this question only 2 percent of the survey respondents mentioned the O.J. trial (see Table 3). The most frequently mentioned sources of information that were perceived as the “single most important source of information about the courts” were television news (40%) and local newspapers (36%). The percentage mentioning newspapers was roughly the same as was found by the 1981 survey conducted for the Iowa Supreme Court, whereas the 1995 respondents were far more likely to mention television news than did the 1981 respondents (only 18%, see Table 3). In 1981, far more respondents mentioned school or college courses (19%) as the most important source of information; in 1995 only 5 percent mentioned formal courses as the single most important source of information. Apparently, formal education is now being replaced by the mass media, particularly television news, as the main source of knowledge about the operations of the courts.

To what extent does the information gained from these various sources provide the respondent with an accurate and well informed view of the courts? This question can be addressed by examining the responses to a series of factually based information questions (Q14 a-e, p.33). These questions dealt with five different aspects of courts including: whether or not an individual accused of a crime must prove their innocence, whether someone accused of a crime has the right to be represented by a lawyer, whether higher courts can overturn lower court decisions, whether judges are appointed or elected in Iowa, and whether part-time judges are required to be lawyers. The percentage of factually correct responses to these five questions varied across the set. The question receiving the highest percentage of correct answers (99%) dealt with an accused person’s right to be represented by a lawyer (Q14b, p.33), whereas the lowest percentage of correct responses (36%) occurred with the question regarding whether or not part-time judges are required to be lawyers (Q14e, p.33).

One of these questions, "In a criminal trial it is up to the person who is accused of a crime to prove his or her innocence," has been asked in other surveys, thus providing a means of across time and place comparison. In a 1981 survey conducted in Iowa, 54 percent correctly knew that a defendant is presumed innocent until proven guilty. Similarly a 1992 study in California found that 52 percent of the survey respondents got the presumed innocent question correct. Our 1995 Iowa study finds 61 percent getting this question correct. In short, there has been an increase in public realization in Iowa that presumed innocence is a basic tenet of the law. Yet, more than one-third of the public still does not understand this basic principle.

While responses to these individual questions are interesting, a more useful analytic approach is to combine the question responses into an index that indicates the number of questions that a respondent got correct (zero to five). After combining the responses we collapsed them into three categories indicating the level of accuracy. A low level of accuracy indicates that the respondent gave correct answers to two or fewer questions, medium indicates a correct answer to three questions and a high level of accuracy indicates correct answers to at least four out of the five questions. Using this approach, 43 percent of all respondents were categorized as having a high level of knowledge, 40 percent medium, and 17 percent a low level of accurate knowledge about these court related facts. There were no differences in level of accuracy across urban or rural respondents or subpopulations defined by age (see Table 4). Differences were found, however, by gender, education and income. Men, better educated, and higher income individuals were more likely to have an accurate view of court related facts than were women, lower income or less-well educated respondents (see Table 4).

To what extent was the level of factual knowledge about the courts influenced by the various sources of information that were frequently used to learn about the courts? Relatively little! For

example, the percent with high knowledge of the court system among those who frequently use newspapers for information about the courts is 45 percent. Exactly the same percentage of those who never use newspapers as a source of information on the courts have a high level of knowledge about the courts. Similarly, there are virtually no significant differences in level of knowledge about the courts across frequency of using any of the other information sources referred to in the survey. However, those who mentioned TV entertainment shows and the O.J. Simpson trial as the single most important source of information about the courts, are clearly less knowledgeable about the courts than are other respondents (see Table 5).

II. Experience with the Iowa Court System

In general, respondents reported a significant amount of direct experience with the Iowa Court system. Experience with the court system was measured in a number of ways — utilizing court services, attending a court proceeding, serving as a juror, or being involved with alternative means for resolving disputes. Whichever the measure, respondents, regardless of demographic grouping, reported substantial experience with Iowa courts.

Nearly 47 percent of respondents have been to a courthouse to use court services in the past three years. This holds true for most demographic categories, although there are some differences (see Table 6). For example, only 35.5 percent of those 55 and older have used court services in the past three years, compared to 56.2 percent of respondents aged 18 to 37. Likewise, lower income respondents were slightly more likely than higher income respondents to have been to a courthouse, as were those respondents who live in bigger cities compared with rural respondents.

The age difference in Table 6 is the most significant (statistically) and somewhat counter intuitive difference in the entire table. The difference in use of court services by age groups can,

however, be explained by looking at the reasons the respondents gave for going to the courthouse. Younger people, relative to middle-aged or those over 55, are much more likely to go to the courthouse to deal with traffic violations and to file for a variety of licenses and registrations-- particularly marriage licenses (see Table 7).

The percentage of respondents who had used court services during the past three years is substantial, but an even larger percentage said they have sought legal advice (67%). Some might be tempted to speculate that, given this relatively high percentage, this advice did not necessarily come from a private attorney (perhaps from a friend or relative, or from Legal Aid Services). This does not seem to be the case; nearly all (94%) sought advice from a private attorney. Only about 4 percent of respondents had received advice from Legal Aid Services, while even fewer (3%) received advice from someone else.

Although seeking legal advice is relatively high for all demographic categories (see Table 6), certain groups of respondents were more likely to have sought legal advice than others. Income levels among respondents has the most clear relationship to whether or not they sought legal advice. For the lowest income category (\$20,000 or less per year), 61% had sought legal advice. By comparison, 76% of those in the highest income category (over \$50,000 per year) reported that they had sought legal advice. The reasons for this difference may be twofold: higher-income respondents are more likely to encounter legal questions relating to property and other assets than their lower-income counterparts, and higher-income respondents may be more likely to feel that they have the financial means it often takes to consult a private attorney.

Nearly a quarter of all respondents reported having once served on a jury. This is consistent with the results of recent surveys in other states (see recent surveys in California, Utah, and

Massachusetts). Not surprisingly, older respondents were the most likely to have served on a jury (38% compared to 9% of the youngest respondents). Lower-income respondents were least likely to have served on a jury (only 20%, compared to 31% of higher-income respondents), perhaps due to the nature of the jury selection process.

Over half of the respondents (55%) reported that they had attended a court proceeding in Iowa. Levels of court proceeding attendance dips below half for only one subgroup — those age 18-37. Nearly all respondents (82%) have attended fewer than 5 court proceedings. When asked about their most recent court experience, the most common responses were ‘juror’ (31%), witness (19%), and visitor (18%). Only about 12 percent of respondents had been a party to a civil case, while 10 percent had been criminal defendants. Among those actually involved in some capacity with a court case, 44 percent said they were “very satisfied” with the decision in the case and another 27 percent said they were “somewhat satisfied” (see Q26e, p. 39).

While levels of attending a court proceeding were high, far fewer respondents reported that they had been involved with some alternative means of resolving a dispute (ADR). Roughly 16 percent of respondents reported that they had been involved with an ADR. College-educated respondents had the highest level of personal experience with ADRs, with 26 percent indicating experience with an ADR. This suggests that ADRs may be more commonly used in professions requiring advanced degrees, or that better-educated individuals are more likely to know enough about ADRs to seek them out. Although the level of personal experience with ADRs appears to be relatively low, respondents still preferred the idea of an ADR compared to going to court. When asked if they would rather utilize an ADR or go to court, 81 percent of respondents chose some type of ADR. Also, satisfaction with the outcome of an ADR decision was very high, 74 percent of those who had been involved in an ADR

said they were satisfied with the outcome (see Q34, p. 42).

III. Evaluation of the Court System

The Iowa courts are perceived by the public as facing a myriad of legal, social and management problems. When the survey respondents were asked about the most important problems facing the courts in Iowa, the most prevalent responses referred to the courts having an overload of cases (17.6%, see total column in Table 8) and the long delays in bringing cases to trial (7.3% in Table 8). The other prevalent categories of responses to the important problems questions include: sentences that are too lenient, the large number of juvenile crimes, violent crimes, drug and alcohol use, and the overcrowding of jails and prisons. The perceived saliency or relative importance of these different problems did not vary greatly across different subgroups of the Iowa population. Young and old, better and less-well educated, upper and lower income respondents, were all equally as likely to mention these particular problems. Urban respondents, however, were more likely than rural respondents to mention that the courts are overloaded with cases, that they handle cases too slowly, that there are too many lawyers and too many unnecessary lawsuits (see Table 8). Rural respondents, on the other hand, were more likely to mention problems such as violent crimes, drugs, alcohol and family-related problems (see Table 8).

Reserve + Delay
lenient sentences

When it comes to evaluating how the court system is dealing with the problems facing the courts, or different aspects of the broader justice system, Iowans are not of a single mind. They are more positive toward some aspects of the justice system, such as the Supreme Court, than toward others, such as lawyers or the prison system. Also, they often are positive about the general principles (e.g., 81% say "Iowa courts generally guarantee everyone a fair trial"; Q11c, p. 32), but are more negative about the specific details (e.g., 58% say that "court procedures are often biased in favor of one

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side"; Q11d, p. 32).

Turning first to the overall ratings, 75 percent of the respondents approved of the job that Iowa courts are doing (Q3, p. 27). Approval of the job that the courts are doing in Iowa was quite widespread across various subpopulations. As Table 9 shows there was little variation in approval ratings across different subpopulations. One exception involves education: less-well educated are somewhat more disapproving of the courts overall job performance than are the better educated (see Table 9). Nevertheless, even among the less-well educated roughly 7 out of 10 respondents approve of the job that the courts are doing. This generally broad endorsement and overall positive assessment of the courts is likewise reflected by other evaluative measures. For example, Table 10 presents the average rating of a number of institutions that were obtained using a rating scale that ranged from zero (most negative) to 100 (most positive). The institutions are arranged in the table according to the average rating obtained, from highest to lowest. The Iowa state patrol and local police top the list as the most positively evaluated institutions. But the courts follow immediately after these police forces, although the ratings for the various court related institutions are significantly lower than the ratings of the two types of police forces (see Table 10). The executive and legislative branches of the state government also received overall positive ratings (average ratings above 50 indicate a preponderance of positive assessments). Despite recent hearings on the role of the FBI in the Waco, Texas standoff with the Branch Davidians and the Ruby Ridge, Idaho incident involving Randy Weaver, an Iowan, the overall rating of the FBI is relatively positive.

A number of institutions do receive predominantly negative ratings. The Iowa prison system is, on average, rated negatively. But rated even more negatively are the US Congress, lawyers, the Federal government, the mass media and politicians who received the lowest rating of all — only 38 (see Table

10). The overall ranking of various state institutions obtained in the 1995 survey is virtually the same ordering obtained in the 1981 Iowa Supreme Court survey. The only difference is that in 1995 the courts are rated more positively relative to the county attorneys, whereas in the 1981 survey the reverse ordering was found.

The survey respondents were also asked to indicate the extent to which they trusted various institutions to do what is right (Q5a-g, p. 28). Not all institutions that were rated with the thermometer rating scale were included in the trust question. However, the percent indicating that they trusted the included institutions are also presented in Table 10 along with the ratings. For those institutions included in the trust question, the ordering of institutions from most to least trusted is virtually the same ordering that is obtained with the thermometer rating scale. The trust question does reveal, however, that among the subset of institutions included in that list, only the US supreme court enjoys the trust of a majority of Iowa citizens (55%). The Iowa courts and judges, however, are trusted far more (43-48%) than is the state prison system (29% trusting) or the Federal government (14%) and politicians (only 6% of the respondents say they trust politicians in general). There is definitely a generalization of distrust across these various institutions, that is those who distrust federal institutions are more likely to distrust state institutions. For example, among those who trust the federal government, 63 percent also trust the Iowa courts in general, whereas among those who distrust the federal government only 28 percent trust the Iowa courts.

To obtain a more detailed picture of how the public evaluates the courts, a number of questions were asked about specific aspects of the court system. The responses to the full battery of questions (Q8a-m, p. 29) are included in the appendix. Here we simply emphasize those items that receive the most positive and negative evaluations. The three most positively assessed attributes of the court, in

order of positive endorsement are: having conveniently located courthouses (53% said this attribute very accurately described the Iowa court system), having judges with sufficient education, training and experience (41%), and having enough clerical and other personnel (31%).

Many more attributes of the courts were negatively assessed than were positively evaluated.

Among the most negatively assessed attributes of the courts were the following: imposing tough sentences on criminals (only 7% said this very accurately described the courts), making sure the courts are not too expensive (8%), giving people a chance to say how the system should be improved (9%), not letting politics influence its decisions (10%), keeping the government from interfering in one's personal life (10%), helping average citizens find out about rules and procedures (10%), concluding court cases in a timely manner (13%). A large majority (88%) of the respondents also thought that "because of lawyers there are more lawsuits than are necessary" (Q11a, p. 32).

These perceptions of how the courts operate were rather uniformly held by various subgroups of Iowa citizens defined by urban/rural resident, age, education and a number of other demographic categories. For example, Table 11 presents perceptions of how the courts operate for a number of these subgroups. Slightly less than half of the survey respondents believe that the courts give people a chance to say how the court system should be improved. But, an even smaller percentage of those living in the suburbs, college educated and middle-income people believe the courts seek input from the public (see Table 11). Yet the college educated are slightly more likely to see the courts as working toward keeping the cost of going to court more reasonable (see Table 11). Approximately half of the respondents also felt that the courts provide a speedy trial, and equity in the decisions that are made by the courts regardless of where a trial is held, thus revealing considerable disagreement over how the courts are perceived to actually operate. Yet despite these deep divisions in evaluations, these

Positive

Negative

① lenient sentences

② too expensive

③ lack public input

④

differences of opinion do not reflect demographic differences. Table 11 (columns 3 and 4) reveals only small differences in those perceptions across such demographic categories as urban/rural residence, education level or age. In short, evaluations of how the courts operate are independent of one's relative socio-economic position in society. Perceptions of court operations are not a reflection of whether one is rich or poor, better educated or less-well educated. This lack of correlations with socio-economic status, however, does not imply that everyone views court operations the same way.

Often the respondents would endorse general principles but see major exceptions when asked about specifics (numerous other surveys have previously pointed to this general finding). For example, 81 percent of the respondents say that "Iowa courts generally guarantee everyone a fair trial" (Q11c, p. 32). The perception of the courts as fair is also widespread across different subpopulations (see Table 12). Although the less-well educated are somewhat less likely to view the courts as fair, even 77 percent of them say the Iowa Courts are generally fair. Moreover, when asked if the courts in Iowa treat "people like you, better, the same, or worse than others," 80 percent of the respondents said "the same". Yet, when asked about specific groups, they frequently stated that certain groups are treated differently by the courts. The popular perception is that "while I believe that I would be treated fairly by the courts, other types of individuals are either mistreated or given special privileges by the courts." For example, 54 percent of the respondents agreed with the statement that "court procedures are often biased in favor of one side" (Q11d, p. 32). Again, this is a rather widespread belief, showing only minor variation across subgroups, with older and less-well educated respondents exhibiting the most negative assessments (see Table 13).

Part of the perception that court procedures are biased is reflected in the associated belief that the courts are too easy on or treat certain groups better than others. For example, 68 percent of the

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respondents believe that the Iowa courts are too easy on criminals (Q11e, p. 32). This belief does not even vary across education levels, although younger people are slightly less likely to state that the courts are too easy on criminals (see Table 14). Likewise, there was clearly a rich or powerful people versus poorer people bias perceived in court actions: 85 percent said that “wealthy people” were treated “better” than others, while 63 percent thought that the courts treated “poor people” “worse” than others (see Q10, p. 31). Similarly, the courts were perceived as treating a number of other groups “better” than others, including: big business (83%), celebrities (85%), politicians (80%), and special interests (57%). Yet other groups are perceived as being treated “worse” by the courts including: people on welfare (50%), blacks and Hispanics (50%), and gays and lesbians (52%). By comparison, the perception of a gender bias in the courts was relatively minor: 24 percent thought women were treated worse while 25 percent thought men were treated better (see Q10, p. 31). In short, when asked about how the courts treat particular groups, Iowans perceive a great deal of bias in court actions.

Perceptions of how the courts treat particular groups are also rather uniform across different population subgroups. The only interesting variation in perceptions of whether the courts treat wealthy people better occurs across education levels. College educated respondents are less likely to perceive the courts as treating wealthy people better than other people, yet even 79 percent of college educated respondents indicated that they think the courts do treat wealthy people better. Similarly, there is little subgroup variation in perceptions of how the courts treat other social groups. For example, college educated are much more likely than high school educated respondents to see the courts treating juveniles better than others (46 and 29% respectively; see Table 15). Yet there is no systematic variation by education level in perceptions of how the courts treat men, women and blacks. There is some significant variation in perceptions of how men are treated by the courts: women, people over 55

express lawless attitudes than are men (see Table 16), as their incomes are, on average, lower than male incomes. On the whole, however, Iowans are law abiding, even 70 percent of those with lower incomes express law abiding attitudes.

An important question to address is whether evaluations of the courts are influenced by knowledge of, and experience with, the court system. The answer is mixed. As Table 17 reveals, respondents with a higher level of knowledge about the courts evaluate the Iowa courts more positively and express more trust in the courts than do those with a low knowledge of the courts. Better educated Iowans are also significantly more positive toward the courts than are Iowans with a high school or lower level education (see Table 17), although education does not seem to affect trust in the courts. Frequency of using different information sources, however, appears to be unrelated to evaluations or trust in the courts. Particularly interesting is the finding that those who frequently followed the O.J. trial were no more, nor less positive toward the Iowa courts than were those who never followed the trial (see Table 17). Indeed, all of the different measures that were included in the survey to determine if the O.J. Simpson trial had any impact on evaluations of the courts and broader justice system in Iowa reveal no impact. For example, there was no significant correlation between following the Simpson trial and beliefs about the courts' treatment of wealthy people, celebrities, or blacks. Moreover, the one-quarter of the sample interviewed after the Simpson verdict was handed down, were no more negative in their evaluations of the courts than were those interviewed before the verdict was reached. Equally interesting is the finding that those who have been jurors are no more positive toward the courts than those who have never been jurors. Having a family member or friend who works in the legal system, on the other hand does seem to promote a somewhat more positive evaluation of the courts (e.g., 46.5% of those respondents who had a family member or friend in the legal system trusted

years of age and those in the lowest income bracket are significantly more likely to see the courts treating men better than other people, yet in all subgroups only about 30 percent perceive men as treated better (see Table 15). Also, 25 percent of men but only 8 percent of women see the courts treating women better than others. Despite these examples of differences in perceptions across subgroups, most individuals expressed similar views of how the courts treat various groups. What this suggests is that when 85 percent of the citizens in Iowa perceive the courts as treating wealthy people better than others, this perception must be based on visible cases that, by their outcomes, imply that the courts do indeed treat wealthy people better than others. If these perceptions were the result of ideology, political orientation or socio-economic status we should have found greater differences in Table 15. Since those differences do not emerge, the data suggest that the perceptions are the result of actual court outcomes.

While a significant percentage of Iowans perceive the courts as biased in one way or another, they are still largely law abiding. Given the Oklahoma City bombings and a widespread concern about the possibility that distrust of government and politicians was leading to a growth in lawlessness among the citizenry, the survey included some questions that are meant to measure lawlessness (see Q11, i-k, p. 32). These questions reveal that roughly 80 percent of Iowans are law abiding individuals. Yet, the data also suggest that a lawless attitude of disrespect for the law is shared by 20 percent of Iowa citizens. Moreover, while this lawless orientation is significantly related to education and income, a surprisingly high percentage of college educated and upper income respondents express a lawless attitude (see Table 16). Lawlessness, however, is most prevalent among lower income respondents, reaching almost 30 percent of those earning \$20,000 or less (see Table 16). This relationship with income is also what accounts for the finding that women are slightly more likely to

the courts as compared with 40.3% trusting among those without a relative or friend in the legal system).

A number of policy changes could certainly be undertaken by the courts as an effort to improve their services and thus potentially increase public assessments of the courts. The survey asked about a number of possible policy changes (Q9a-h, p. 30). The possible changes include the use of alternative ways to resolve disputes, expanding court operations to evenings and weekends, providing public education in the use of court services, making the courts simpler to use by people not represented by a lawyer, and increasing the use of computer technology in court operations. Most of these possible changes in the functioning of the courts get endorsed by a majority of the survey respondents (see Table 18). Two possible changes, however, are seen as a bad idea by a majority of the respondents. Reducing the number of places where local court services are offered is seen as a bad idea by 59 percent of the respondents. Similarly, 51 percent thought that replacing judges with computers to handle simple court cases was a bad idea, but 34 percent actually thought that this was a good idea.

One might expect that respondents in rural places would be more opposed to reducing the number of places where local court services are offered, but this is not the case. As Table 19 shows, 64 percent of big city respondents as compared with 57 percent of rural respondents thought that the reduction of places where court services are offered is a bad idea. The college educated and those with higher incomes were also more likely to see the reduction of court locations as a bad idea (see Table 19). Similarly surprising is the finding that younger and better educated respondents were more likely, than older and less-well educated respondents, to see replacing judges by computers for certain types of cases as a bad idea (see Table 20). Apparently, since younger and better educated individuals use court services more frequently they prefer to interact with a person rather than a computer, whereas for those

who use court services less frequently increased computerization may sound like an excellent idea, at least in the abstract, since they would not be very likely to confront such a situation. Overall, most of the possible changes addressed in the survey were endorsed by a substantial majority of the respondents in all demographic subgroups.

Conclusion

Overall, the Iowa courts are given a relatively positive evaluation by the Iowa citizenry. A large majority believe that the courts would be fair to them and to people like themselves. Most people who have ever been involved in a court case are also satisfied with the outcome of the case. Yet, at the same time, a substantial proportion of the survey respondents feel that the courts favor certain groups, particularly the wealthy and powerful, while operating in ways that are disadvantageous for other social groups. These perceptions of inequitable treatment are widely held, regardless of political ideology or socio-economic status. Addressing these concerns about inequitable treatment would appear to be among the major challenges for the courts as they move into the 21st century.

Tables

Table 1:
Interest and Involvement With the Courts by Demographic Groups

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Very Interested in Courts (Q13)</i>	<i>Often Interested in Specific Cases (Q19)</i>	<i>Job- Interactions with legal system (Q50)</i>	<i>Family/Friend works in legal system (Q51)</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>				
Big City	21.2	24.6	17.2	47.5
Sm City/Suburb	13.2	26.8	17.6	44.4
Sm Town/Rural	16.9	19.8	13.9	45.3
<i>Education</i>				
High School	14.9	24.9	8.6	37.3
Some College	16.7	18.9	15.6	46.5
College or more	18.3	22.5	28.4	58.4
<i>Age</i>				
18-37	16.1	21.7	15.1	53.4
38-54	12.2	18.9	20.9	46.8
55-plus	21.1	27.0	10.6	35.2
<i>Income</i>				
\$0-20,000	18.0	27.3	9.0	36.0
\$20,001-50,000	16.6	22.9	16.9	47.2
\$50,001-plus	15.8	23.3	26.9	59.6
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	16.7	20.4	18.3	46.9
Female	16.0	24.9	13.2	43.7

Source: The University of Iowa Social Science Institute (UISSI) Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 2:
Percent 'Frequently' using Information Source by Demographics

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Newspaper</i>	<i>Court Materials</i>	<i>Radio News</i>	<i>TV News</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>				
Big City	42.6	10.3	31.4	44.9
Sm City/Suburb	43.9	12.3	31.9	46.9
Sm Town/Rural	39.8	14.7	34.0	46.4
<i>Education</i>				
High School	41.2	14.4	38.1	48.3
Some College	40.2	11.0	30.7	45.3
College or more	42.9	13.7	25.1	42.4
<i>Age</i>				
18-37	36.7	13.5	27.7	42.7
38-54	42.4	13.0	32.6	44.5
55-plus	44.8	13.5	37.5	50.8
<i>Income</i>				
\$0-20,000	46.0	14.0	39.3	50.3
\$20,001-50,000	42.5	12.3	32.3	46.7
\$50,001-plus	34.2	16.0	29.5	39.7
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	37.8	16.7	30.0	42.8
Female	44.7	10.0	35.4	49.2

Table 2:
Percent 'Frequently' using Information Source by Demographics (con't)

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>TV Shows</i>	<i>OJ Trial</i>	<i>Friend</i>	<i>Family</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>				
Big City	12.0	38.5	13.6	18.8
Sm City/Suburb	15.2	37.1	14.4	19.4
Sm Town/Rural	16.2	37.3	16.2	19.2
<i>Education</i>				
High School	18.1	40.4	18.9	22.2
Some College	13.6	37.5	14.8	17.3
College or more	12.2	31.4	8.4	15.7
<i>Age</i>				
18-37	12.0	32.7	12.0	17.2
38-54	19.3	37.7	15.5	17.0
55-plus	14.3	41.2	18.5	23.3
<i>Income</i>				
\$0-20,000	13.6	40.6	14.3	20.7
\$20,001-50,000	16.7	37.4	17.7	20.0
\$50,001-plus	16.4	37.5	11.0	14.4
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	14.6	36.7	13.6	17.9
Female	15.8	38.1	16.8	20.5

Table 2:
Percent 'Frequently' using Information Source by Demographics (con't)

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>School</i>			
<i>Urban/Rural</i>				
Big City	16.5			
Sm City/Suburb	18.2			
Sm Town/Rural	18.6			
<i>Education</i>				
High School	18.5			
Some College	16.7			
College or more	19.0			
<i>Age</i>				
18-37	20.3			
38-54	17.1			
55-plus	17.3			
<i>Income</i>				
\$0-20,000	16.6			
\$20,001-50,000	18.9			
\$50,001-plus	18.6			
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	20.1			
Female	16.3			

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 3:
Single Most Important Source of Information About the Courts

<i>Source</i>	<i>1995</i>	<i>1981*</i>
Local Newspaper	36%	39%
Court Materials	2	1
Radio News	8	na
Television News	40	18
Television Entertainment	1	na
O.J. Simpson Trial	2	na
Friends	3	na
Family	4	na
School or College	5	19
	100%	

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

* The 1981 survey conducted for the Judicial Coordinating Committee of the Iowa Supreme Court. Results for only comparable categories are presented.

Table 4:
Level of Knowledge About the Courts by Demographics

Knowledge Level (Accuracy)			
<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>			
Big City	16.9	37.3	45.8
Sm City/Suburb	16.7	39.3	44.0
Sm Town/Rural	15.7	41.8	42.5
<i>Education</i>			
High School	19.6	41.9	38.6
Some College	15.5	43.3	41.2
College or more	10.5	34.0	55.5
<i>Age</i>			
18-37	16.9	38.6	44.6
38-54	13.6	41.1	45.3
55-plus	18.5	40.8	40.8
<i>Income</i>			
\$0-20,000	20.8	42.7	36.5
\$20,001-50,000	14.1	39.8	46.1
\$50,001-plus	9.6	41.8	48.6
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	13.3	37.6	49.1
Female	19.0	42.6	38.3

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Knowledge Index (Q14a-e)

Low = 0-2 correct

Medium = 3 correct

High = 4-5 correct

Table 5:
Knowledge of the Courts by Most Important Source of Information

	<i>Knowledge</i> (row percents)		
<i>Most Important Source of Information</i>	<i>Low</i>	<i>Medium</i>	<i>High</i>
Newspaper	14.9	41.8	43.3
Radio News	10.9	45.3	43.8
Television News	17.0	37.6	45.3
TV Shows/O J. Trial	27.3	45.5	27.3
Friends/Family/Court Materials	16.5	35.9	47.6

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 6:
Direct Experience With the Court System by Demographics

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Been to Courthouse in past 3 ys (Q24)</i>	<i>Sought Legal Advice (Q25)</i>	<i>Been a juror (Q49)</i>	<i>Attended a court proceeding (Q26)</i>	<i>Been involved with ADR (Q31)</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>					
Big City	51.7	60.2	22.0	57.6	15.4
Sm City/Suburb	45.5	73.8	25.0	55.9	17.9
Sm Town/Rural	45.8	64.2	24.2	53.1	15.4
<i>Education</i>					
High School	46.3	62.3	25.6	50.3	11.1
Some College	49.8	71.2	23.4	61.6	15.9
College or more	43.5	68.6	22.5	53.9	26.2
<i>Age</i>					
18-37	56.2	59.2	08.6	44.7	14.0
38-54	47.5	72.8	26.4	60.0	17.9
55-plus	35.5	67.2	37.9	59.2	16.9
<i>Income</i>					
\$0-20,000	51.1	61.0	19.7	57.9	13.0
\$20,001-50,000	46.7	66.6	22.4	54.7	15.0
\$50,001-plus	45.9	75.9	30.8	59.3	27.4
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	48.8	67.2	23.8	58.7	20.2
Female	44.5	66.2	24.5	50.8	12.5

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 7:
Reason for Going to Courthouse by Age and Total Sample

Value Label	18-37 Years	38-54 Years	55 + Years	Total
Ticket/Traffic Violation	11.8	9.5	5.0	8.7
Marriage License	4.9	2.6	2.0	3.1
Jury Duty	7.8	9.5	9.0	8.7
Small Claims/Personal Case	15.7	8.6	14.0	13.0
Bankruptcy	1.0	0.0	2.0	0.9
Real Estate	2.0	3.4	1.0	2.2
Driver's License	3.9	6.0	5.0	5.0
Divorce	5.9	6.9	7.0	6.5
Birth/Death Certificate	1.0	3.4	3.0	2.5
General - Trial	7.8	5.2	11.0	8.1
License/Registration General	19.6	17.2	16.0	17.4
Child Support/ Custody/ Adoption	4.9	5.2	5.0	5.0
Tax Related	8.8	11.2	6.0	8.7
Client/Work-Related	2.0	4.3	5.0	3.7
Miscellaneous	2.9	6.9	9.0	6.5
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 8:
Problems with the Justice System, by Urban/Rural

Response	Big City	Small City Urban	Small Town Rural	Total
Court Overload/Too Many Cases	22.4	19.5	16.6	17.6
Lack of Competent Jurors/Juries	2.0	1.2	2.0	1.5
Slowness/Backlog/Delay	14.3	3.7	7.3	7.3
Unnecessary Lawsuits/Trials	4.1	2.4	1.3	1.8
Lawyers: Too Many/Unethical	4.1	7.3	2.6	4.3
Judges: Not Enough/Overworked/ Not Respected	2.0	2.4	3.3	2.4
Sentencing: Inappropriate/Too Lenient/ Too Many Plea Bargains	10.2	12.2	13.2	13.1
Unfair Procedures: Racism/Preference Given to Those with Money	8.2	4.9	4.0	4.6
Too Early Parole/Sentences Not Carried Out	--	3.7	1.3	2.1
Overcrowded Jails and Prisons	6.1	6.1	5.3	5.5
Death Penalty	4.1	--	0.7	1.5
Juvenile Crime/Delinquency	8.2	8.5	9.3	8.8
Abuse (Domestic, Child)/Harassment	2.0	2.4	2.6	2.4
Divorce/Child Custody/Child Support Cases	--	--	2.0	1.8
Crime/Violence	--	7.3	6.0	5.5
Gangs	--	--	1.3	0.6
Drugs/Alcohol	--	4.9	4.0	4.0
Drunk Driving	--	2.4	2.0	1.8

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 9:
Approve of Job Iowa Courts Are Doing

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Approve</i>	<i>Disapprove</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>		
Big City	72.0	28.0
Sm City/Suburb	73.3	26.7
Sm Town/Rural	76.1	23.9
<i>Education</i>		
High School	69.5	30.5
Some College	74.2	25.8
College or more	84.7	15.3
<i>Age</i>		
18-37	75.7	24.3
38-54	76.7	23.3
55-plus	72.4	27.6
<i>Income Level</i>		
0-\$20,000	70.3	29.7
\$21,000-\$50,000	74.5	25.5
> \$50,000	85.2	14.8
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	78.7	21.3
Female	70.8	29.2

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 10:
Evaluative Ratings and Trust* in Various Institutions

	<i>Mean Rating</i>	<i>% Trusting *</i>
Iowa State Patrol	71	--
Local Police	64	--
U.S. Supreme Court	60	55
Iowa Supreme Court	59	48
Iowa Courts in General	58	43
Iowa Justice System	58	--
Iowa Judges	57	43
County Attorney	57	--
FBI	56	--
Office of Governor	54	--
State Legislature	54	--
Iowa State Prison System	49	29
U.S. Congress	46	--
Lawyers	46	--
Federal Government	43	14
The Media	43	--
Politicians in General	38	6

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

*The trust question (Q5) was asked for fewer institutions.

Table 11:
Perceived Court Attributes by Demographic Categories*

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Public has Input^a</i>	<i>Courts Not Too Expensive^b</i>	<i>Speedy Trial^c</i>	<i>Equality of Decision^d</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>				
Big City	47.3	51.0	56.3	57.1
Sm City/Suburb	42.1	44.0	51.9	47.2
Sm Town/Rural	50.0	50.3	56.0	53.4
<i>Education</i>				
High School	49.4	46.9	54.2	56.7
Some College	48.3	44.7	55.7	47.4
College or more	41.7	57.5	54.3	50.3
<i>Age</i>				
18-37	48.4	52.9	56.8	56.4
38-54	44.8	44.2	51.4	49.0
55-plus	48.3	47.6	55.4	51.1
<i>Income Level</i>				
0-\$20,000	54.5	51.9	54.4	51.2
\$21,000-\$50,000	41.3	46.2	50.9	50.6
> \$50,000	47.0	55.1	59.1	54.8
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	45.0	50.0	52.4	53.7
Female	49.2	47.0	57.0	50.7

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

* Table entries represent the percent of the particular demographic group saying that the given quality accurately reflects the way the Iowa courts operate (see Question 8, p. 19). Responses to the following sub-items under Question 8 were used for this table:

^a 8b. Gives people a chance to say how the system should be improved.

^b 8c. Makes sure the courts are not too expensive.

^c 8h. Concludes court cases in a timely manner.

^d 8m. Ensures that you can expect the same decision regardless of where your trial is held.

Table 12:
Perception that the Iowa Courts are Fair by Demographics

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>		
Big City	81.7	18.3
Sm City/Suburb	78.5	21.5
Sm Town/Rural	82.7	17.3
<i>Education</i>		
High School	77.4	22.6
Some College	83.3	16.7
College or more	84.9	15.1
<i>Age</i>		
18-37	82.6	17.4
38-54	80.4	19.6
55-plus	80.3	19.7
<i>Income Level</i>		
0-\$20,000	78.7	21.3
\$21,000-\$50,000	79.7	20.3
> \$50,000	86.7	13.3
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	84.0	16.0
Female	78.4	21.6

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

* The 'agree' column indicates the percent seeing the courts as fair.

Table 13:
Court Procedures Biased in Favor of One Side

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>		
Big City	53.1	46.9
Sm City/Suburb	60.3	39.7
Sm Town/Rural	58.4	41.6
<i>Education</i>		
High School	59.7	40.3
Some College	62.9	37.1
College or more	50.3	49.7
<i>Age</i>		
18-37	57.9	42.1
38-54	54.2	45.8
55-plus	63.3	36.7
<i>Income Level</i>		
0-\$20,000	64.8	35.2
\$21,000-\$50,000	60.2	39.8
> \$50,000	50.4	49.6
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	59.1	40.9
Female	57.6	42.4

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 14:
Iowa Court Too Easy on Criminals

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Agree*</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>		
Big City	73.9	26.1
Sm City/Suburb	65.9	34.1
Sm Town/Rural	74.3	25.8
<i>Education</i>		
High School	73.5	26.5
Some College	69.7	30.3
College or more	70.1	29.9
<i>Age</i>		
18-37	64.8	35.2
38-54	75.0	25.0
55-plus	75.1	24.9
<i>Income Level</i>		
0-\$20,000	66.5	33.5
\$21,000-\$50,000	71.0	29.0
> \$50,000	73.7	26.3
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	71.2	28.8
Female	71.9	28.1

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

* The 'agree' column indicates the percent

Table 15:
Group Treatment Better by the Courts*

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Wealthy People</i>	<i>Juveniles</i>	<i>Men</i>	<i>Women</i>	<i>Blacks/ Hispanics</i>
<i>Income Level</i>					
0-\$20,000	83.9	32.9	29.1	18.6	12.6
\$21,000-\$50,000	86.6	36.5	20.7	17.4	13.8
> \$50,000	84.5	36.9	19.4	15.0	13.3
<i>Gender</i>					
Male	84.2	40.1	15.9	24.7	16.1
Female	85.9	30.8	31.0	7.7	10.7
<i>Urban/Rural</i>					
Big City	86.8	30.6	27.0	17.0	11.8
Sm City/Suburb	84.9	47.5	24.9	17.7	10.3
Sm Town/Rural	84.6	29.5	22.1	14.4	15.6
<i>Age</i>					
18-37	83.3	34.2	20.3	17.3	10.0
38-54	89.1	41.1	18.5	16.9	14.9
55-plus	82.4	24.7	33.3	13.0	15.2
<i>Education</i>					
High School	85.4	29.2	23.7	18.5	15.0
Some College	88.9	35.8	64.9	12.6	12.4
College or more	79.3	45.9	11.4	14.9	11.7

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

*The Table entries indicate the percent that perceive the Iowa courts as treating the particular group better than others.

Table 16:
Pay Judgement — Even if Disagree

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Agree</i>	<i>Disagree</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>		
Big City	80.0	20.0
Sm City/Suburb	81.6	18.4
Sm Town/Rural	79.7	20.3
<i>Education</i>		
High School	77.9	22.1
Some College	79.7	20.3
College or more	85.5	14.5
<i>Age</i>		
18-37	78.0	22.0
38-54	83.7	16.3
55-plus	79.5	20.5
<i>Income Level</i>		
0-\$20,000	70.6	29.4
\$21,000-\$50,000	82.2	17.8
> \$50,000	88.7	11.3
<i>Gender</i>		
Male	84.1	15.9
Female	76.7	23.3

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

- * The 'agree' column indicates the percent giving a law-abiding response, that is, one should pay a court judgement even if you disagree with the court's decision.

Table 17:
Ratings and Trust in Iowa State Courts in General
by Knowledge and Experience With the Courts

	<i>Mean Thermometer</i>	<i>% Trusting</i>
<i>Knowledge</i>		
Low	54.2	33.3
High	59.2	45.6
<i>Education</i>		
High School or less	56.7	39.9
College plus	63.7	38.0
<i>Info. Source: Newspaper</i>		
Frequently	58.9	46.0
Never	57.4	46.9
<i>Info. Source: TV News</i>		
Frequently	57.7	41.5
Never	55.7	44.9
<i>Info. Source: O.J. Trial</i>		
Frequently	57.8	41.1
Never	57.0	41.6
<i>Served as Juror</i>		
Yes	58.6	41.1
No	58.3	43.7
<i>Family/Friend in Legal System</i>		
Yes	59.5	46.5
No	57.3	40.3

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 18:
Proposals For Improving Court Services

<i>Proposed Change</i>	<i>Bad idea</i>	<i>Good idea</i>
Reducing the number of places where local court services are offered.	59	16
Encouraging the resolution of disputes in ways other than going to court.	10	69
Expanding court operations to include evening and weekend hours.	26	53
Providing public education on how to utilize court services.	11	69
Making the system simpler to use when a person is not represented by a lawyer.	15	68
Selecting juries from a wider area than just the county where the case is being tried.	31	48
Increasing the use of computer and communications technology in court operations.	10	69
Replacing judges with computers to handle simple court cases like traffic violations.	51	31

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 19:
Reduce Number of Places Where Court Services Offered

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Bad Idea</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good Idea</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>			
Big City	64.3	23.5	12.2
Sm City/Suburb	58.6	24.6	16.8
Sm Town/Rural	57.3	26.5	16.3
<i>Education</i>			
High School	54.2	25.4	20.5
Some College	59.2	26.1	14.7
College or more	66.5	24.9	8.6
<i>Age</i>			
18-37	57.7	29.2	13.1
38-54	64.5	22.4	13.1
55-plus	53.8	24.9	23.1
<i>Income Level</i>			
0-\$20,000	46.2	36.7	17.2
\$21,000-\$50,000	64.2	21.8	14.0
> \$50,000	67.1	21.9	11.0
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	57.8	26.3	15.9
Female	59.8	24.5	15.7

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

Table 20:
Replacing Judges with Computers on Some Cases

<i>Demographics</i>	<i>Bad Idea</i>	<i>Neutral</i>	<i>Good Idea</i>
<i>Urban/Rural</i>			
Big City	54.2	16.1	29.7
Sm City/Suburb	52.0	15.5	32.5
Sm Town/Rural	50.2	20.0	29.7
<i>Education</i>			
High School	47.5	17.1	35.4
Some College	55.4	16.3	28.3
College or more	53.8	22.0	24.2
<i>Age</i>			
18-37	54.9	15.4	29.7
38-54	54.6	15.4	30.0
55-plus	44.5	22.8	32.7
<i>Income Level</i>			
0-\$20,000	48.6	20.8	30.6
\$21,000-\$50,000	53.5	16.0	30.5
> \$50,000	30.6	30.5	31.5
<i>Gender</i>			
Male	48.9	15.3	35.7
Female	53.7	20.3	26.0

Source: UISSI Supreme Court Survey, 1995

APPENDIX

IV. Methodology

The Iowa Social Science Institute (ISSI) at The University of Iowa works to ensure that all of our work meets high standards of scientific measurement. To that end, ISSI works to minimize error and other biases that can influence survey results. There are three principal sources of error for survey research, question-wording effects, interviewer effects, and sampling error.

Question-wording effects can become a problem if individual survey items are constructed in such a way as to influence responses. The most problematic of these questions are those which lead a respondent to a particular response, and those double-barreled questions which ask about more than one thing in the same question. In order to minimize the biases that can be introduced with question wording, ISSI employs an extensive research and testing regimen for all of our surveys. This involves collecting information about previous surveys with a similar focus, and the creation of new survey items for the specific project at hand. The final survey is always field-tested, with an emphasis on minimizing question-wording effects on responses.

Interviewer behavior can cause problems for a survey if interviewers do not behave in a standardized manner. Interviewers must be trained to follow the questionnaire precisely, and answer respondent queries in a non-biased fashion. In order to ensure the highest quality of interviewer behavior, ISSI trains its interviewers extensively. Comprised primarily of undergraduate social science majors, our interviewing staff is trained in the procedures for survey research in a variety of ways. They receive instruction on the theoretical concepts relating to survey research, as well as more practical, how-to training on how to conduct individual interviews.

Our interviewers also receive extensive training on how to work with our state-of-the-art computer-aided telephone interviewing (CATI) system. ISSI supervisors work with each interviewer

individually and in small groups, working to improve the technique of individual interviewers. In addition, our supervisors (typically advanced undergraduates or graduate students) monitor interviews in progress to ensure the finest quality of data collection.

Sampling error refers to the overall representativeness of our data. For the 803 completed interviews in this study, the overall sampling error is ± 3.5 percentage points. This indicates that if the total adult population of Iowa had been interviewed instead of a sample, the observed findings would, 99 out of 100 times, lie within a range of ± 3.5 percentage points. But this low sampling error alone is not enough to ensure the representativeness of a sample.

The types of people being interviewed must also be considered. One problem with telephone surveys conducted over a very short period of time (overnight polls, for example) is that they can only interview respondents who are at home and available to be interviewed at that time. This is problematic, because it systematically eliminates certain people from being selected as respondents. In order to overcome this problem, we call each potential respondent up to ten times before we drop them out of our sample.

Another potential problem with survey results is the refusal rate. A certain number of potential respondents will always decline to be interviewed, but if that number becomes too high, it can be problematic for the survey results. That is why our interviewers are also trained in techniques for convincing reluctant respondents to complete the interview. Overall, the cooperation rate for this study was 59 percent. In other words, 59 percent of the people we spoke to agreed to complete the interview. In some cases, the interview could not be completed, because of scheduling conflicts or other related problems.

Another useful statistic for measuring the representativeness of survey results is the response rate, which indicates the percentage of completed interviews out of all the potential respondents (many of whom we were never able to contact). For this study, the response rate was 54 percent. Both the cooperation and response rates are well within the standards set for telephone interviews.

Iowa Supreme Court Survey Questions and Responses

All distributions are based upon 803 interviews conducted by the Iowa Social Science Institute between September 12 and October 6, 1995.

1. Our nation's justice system is composed of many different agencies and institutions, some of which are more familiar to people than others. Let me ask you, what comes to mind when you think about the justice system?

Courts - General	28.7
Supreme Court	5.6
O.J. Trial	5.6
Judges/Juries/Trials	4.1
Law Enforcement	3.6
Fed. Agencies/Bureaucracy	2.1
Atty. General/Lawyers	3.3
System Not Working/Needs Improvement	2.7
Slowness/Backlog	2.7
Generally Unfair/Inequality	4.7
Outcomes Unfair	3.6
Procedures Unfair	0.9
General Fairness/Justice	3.0
System is Fair/Works Well	3.0
General Negative	8.9
DK/Pay No Attention/NA	11.8
Other	5.9

- 2 Thinking only about the courts in Iowa, what do you think are the most important problems facing the Iowa state courts today?

Court Overload/Too Many Cases	17.6
Lack of Competent Jurors/Juries	1.5
Slowness/Backlog/Delay	7.3
Unnecessary Lawsuits/Trials	1.8
Lawyers: Too Many/Unethical	4.3
Judges: Not Enough/Overworked/ Not Respected	2.4
Sentencing: Inappropriate/Too Lenient/ Too Many Plea Bargains	13.1
Unfair Procedures: Racism/Preference Given to Those with Money	4.6
Too Early Parole/Sentences Not Carried Out	2.1
Overcrowded Jails and Prisons	5.5
Death Penalty	1.5
Juvenile Crime/Delinquency	8.8
Abuse (Domestic, Child)/Harassment	2.4
Divorce/Child Custody/Child Support Cases	1.8
Crime/Violence	5.5
Gangs	0.6
Drugs/Alcohol	4.0
Drunk Driving	1.8

Note: Questions one and two were each asked to half of the sample. Half of the respondents received question one and the other half received question two.

3. Generally speaking, do you approve or disapprove of the job that the Iowa courts are doing?

Approve	63.5
Disapprove	21.5
DK/REF	14.9

4. Now let's talk about your feelings toward various institutions and groups. I'll read the name of an institution or group and ask you to rate that institution or group on a thermometer that runs from 0 to 100 degrees. A rating of 50 degrees is neutral. Ratings between 51 and 100 degrees mean that you feel warm toward that institution or group, and ratings from 0 to 49 mean that you feel cool toward that institution or group. If you aren't sure about a particular institution or group, just let me know and we can move on to the next one.

	Negative	Neutral	Positive	DK/REF
a. Your local police department	16.9	12.1	68.4	2.6
b. The U.S. Congress	40.4	23.9	30.4	5.3
c. The Office of the Governor	28.5	19.3	47.3	4.6
d. The Iowa State legislature	20.5	27.4	42.0	10.2
e. The U.S. Supreme Court	15.3	22.1	53.2	9.3
f. The Iowa Supreme Court	9.6	25.6	47.1	17.7
g. Your County Attorney's office	18.5	23.4	46.4	11.7
h. The Iowa State Courts in general	13.9	24.6	52.1	9.4
i. The Iowa State Prison System	31.0	24.3	28.8	15.9
j. The Iowa State Patrol	6.1	13.0	77.7	3.2
k. The Justice System as a whole in Iowa	18.3	21.7	54.4	5.6
l. The FBI	20.8	22.4	44.1	12.7
m. Lawyers	41.4	25.3	30.6	2.7
n. The Federal Government in Washington	48.3	21.2	26.1	4.4
o. Politicians in general	59.7	20.4	16.6	3.3

(Q4 continued)	Negative	Neutral	Positive	DK/REF
p. The media	48.8	22.6	25.9	2.8
q. Iowa Judges	15.8	24.7	46.7	12.8

5. Next I'm going to read you a shorter list of these institutions, but this time I'd like you to tell me how much you trust each institution to do what is right. I'd like you to rate each institution on a scale from 1-5 where 1 indicates that you have no trust at all in the institution and 5 indicates that you trust the institution a great deal to do what is right. You can use any number between 1 and 5.

	1 No Trust at All	2	3	4	5 Trust a Great Deal	DK/REF
a. The U.S. Supreme Court	4.5	11.3	32.9	36.4	13.0	2.0
b. The Iowa Supreme Court	2.9	8.3	35.9	36.0	10.1	6.8
c. The Iowa State Courts in general	3.4	11.5	40.1	35.4	6.4	3.4
d. The Iowa State Prison System	9.1	18.9	37.5	22.9	3.5	8.1
e. The Federal Government in Washington	19.9	31.8	33.6	11.5	2.5	0.7
f. Politicians in general	28.8	38.5	27.0	4.4	1.2	0.1
g. Iowa Judges	4.7	13.0	36.7	33.4	8.2	4.0

8. Now I'm going to read you a list of some qualities that might describe the Iowa court system. For each statement, please tell me to what extent you think the Iowa courts actually operate the way the statement indicates.

	1 Very Accurate	2 Somewhat Accurate	3 Somewhat Inaccurate	4 Not at All Accurate	DK/REF
a. Has judges with sufficient education, training and experience	38.5	42.6	6.5	3.0	9.5
b. Gives people a chance to say how the system should be improved	8.3	35.6	29.0	20.2	6.8
c. Imposes tough sentences on criminals	6.6	31.9	31.3	25.7	4.6
d. Keeps the government from interfering in one's personal life	9.3	36.5	24.4	22.5	7.2
e. Makes sure the courts are not too expensive	7.3	33.3	24.0	19.1	16.3
f. Helps average citizens find out about rules and procedures	9.8	41.5	23.9	19.1	5.7
g. Has enough clerical and other court personnel	25.5	37.7	10.5	7.7	18.6
h. Concludes court cases in a timely manner	11.8	38.6	21.7	20.0	7.8
i. Is a neutral body that applies the laws as they are written	14.4	50.8	15.6	9.3	9.8
j. Has courthouses that are conveniently located	51.9	36.2	5.2	3.0	3.6
k. Does not let politics influence its decisions	9.2	30.8	27.5	25.9	6.6
l. Has judges who serve the interests of the public rather than their own personal interests.	20.9	47.8	13.7	8.1	9.5
m. Ensures that you can expect the same decision regardless of where your trial is held.	14.4	33.7	26.5	17.7	7.6

9. Next I'm going to read you a list of ideas that some people think would help the courts save money or deliver services better. I'd like you to rate each proposed change on a scale from 1-5, where one means that it is a bad idea and five means it is a very good idea.

	1 This is a bad idea	2	3	4	5 This is a very good idea	9 DK/REF
a. Reducing the number of places where local court services are offered.	33.7	22.9	24.4	7.3	7.8	3.7
b. Encouraging the resolution of disputes in ways other than going to court.	3.6	6.2	20.0	27.0	41.5	1.6
c. Expanding court operations to include evening and weekend hours.	13.0	12.3	20.9	25.3	27.0	1.5
d. Providing public education on how to utilize court services.	3.7	6.5	19.4	24.8	43.6	2.0
e. Making the system simpler to use when a person is not represented by a lawyer.	5.9	8.1	16.9	22.0	44.0	3.1
f. Selecting juries from a wider area than just the county where the case is being tried.	15.8	14.6	20.5	19.3	28.0	2.0
g. Increasing the use of computer and communications technology in court operations.	4.5	5.5	18.8	29.9	37.2	4.1
h. Replacing judges with computers to handle simple court cases like traffic violations.	34.1	16.2	17.6	14.6	15.4	2.1

10. Some people think the courts treat everyone the same while others think the courts treat certain groups better than others. I am going to read you a list of groups and for each one I would like you to tell me whether the courts treat them better than others, treat them worse than others, or treat them the same as others.

	1 Treat Them Better Than Others	2 Treat Them Worse Than Others	3 Treat Them Same as Others	9 DK/REF
a. People like you	7.3	11.0	74.8	6.8
b. The elderly	19.2	25.0	51.7	4.1
c. People on welfare	14.4	47.3	34.1	4.1
d. The handicapped	28.5	14.1	52.1	5.4
e. Women	15.2	22.9	58.0	3.9
f. Wealthy people	82.8	2.0	12.6	2.6
g. Special interest groups	52.9	6.1	32.8	8.2
h. Big business	80.1	2.2	14.2	3.5
i. Blacks and Hispanics	12.6	47.4	34.2	5.7
j. Men	22.8	10.2	62.9	4.1
k. People accused of crimes	10.8	31.9	50.2	7.1
l. Gays and Lesbians	10.7	46.1	32.3	11.0
m. Politicians	77.5	3.6	14.9	4.0
n. Labor unions	31.5	14.4	44.3	9.7
o. Poor people	4.5	61.4	31.8	2.4
p. Juveniles	33.1	21.3	39.4	6.2
q. Celebrities	83.7	1.5	12.0	2.9

11. Please tell me if you strongly agree, somewhat agree, somewhat disagree or strongly disagree with each of the following statements.

	1 Strongly Agree	2 Somewhat Agree	3 Somewhat Disagree	4 Strongly Disagree	DK/REF
a. Because of lawyers there are more lawsuits than necessary.	67.1	19.7	6.0	5.2	2.0
b. The courts in Iowa treat everyone with equal respect.	16.2	36.0	26.8	15.8	5.2
c. The courts in Iowa generally guarantee everyone a fair trial.	31.6	47.6	11.2	7.2	2.4
d. Court procedures are often biased in favor of one side.	20.9	33.3	24.5	14.2	7.1
e. The Iowa courts are generally too easy on criminals.	31.0	37.0	18.4	8.6	5.0
f. The basic rights of citizens are well protected by the Iowa courts.	27.4	49.7	13.4	7.2	2.2
g. Many of the people convicted of crimes in Iowa are actually innocent.	3.9	15.6	36.4	34.1	10.1
h. On the whole, Iowa judges are honest.	39.7	43.8	7.5	4.6	4.4
i. People should obey the law even if it goes against what they think is right.	54.2	27.1	10.5	6.0	2.2
j. It is hard to blame a person for breaking the law if they can get away with it.	9.6	11.7	9.1	67.6	2.0
k. If a court orders a person to pay a judgment, that person should pay the money, even if they think the court is wrong.	46.9	29.6	13.0	5.9	4.6

13. Generally speaking, how interested are you in the workings of the state court system? Very interested, somewhat interested, or not at all interested?

Very interested	16.3
Somewhat interested	70.1
Not at all interested	13.6

14. Next I'm going to read to you a list of statements about the justice system. Please tell me if you think each one is accurate or inaccurate about how the justice system currently operates.

	Accurate	Inaccurate	DK/REF
a. Judges in this state are appointed rather than elected.	59.5	26.2	14.3
b. Part-time judges are not required to be lawyers.	26.8	47.2	26.0
c. In a criminal trial it is up to the person who is accused of a crime to prove his or her innocence.	36.2	61.4	2.4
d. Everyone accused of a serious crime has the right to be represented in court by a lawyer.	98.3	1.1	0.6
e. The highest court in this state has the power to overrule decisions made in lower state courts.	88.4	5.7	5.9

15. Approximately what percent of the state budget would you say is spent directly on the Iowa courts?

0-5%	10.6
6-15%	12.9
16-25%	9.1
26 or more%	15.6
DK/REF	51.8

16. (If Answer Given to Q15) Do you think this amount is too much, about the right amount, or not enough support from the state budget?

Too Much	11.5
About the Right Amount	48.7
Not Enough Support	32.4
DK/REF	5.6

17. Next we would like to examine some of the various sources you may or may not be receiving information about the courts from. For each of the following sources of information, I am going to ask you to indicate how often you get information from each source on a scale from 1 to 4 where 1=Frequently and 4=Never. You can use any number between 1 and 4.

	1 Frequently	2	3	4 Never	9 DK/REF
a. Your local newspaper	41.1	25.7	19.7	12.8	0.7
b. Materials available from the court	13.0	11.6	14.6	58.8	2.1
c. Radio news	32.8	30.5	20.8	15.7	0.2
d. Television news	46.1	26.7	17.2	10.0	0.1
e. Television shows such as L.A. Law or Law & Order	15.1	22.7	23.8	37.5	1.0
f. The O.J. Simpson trial	36.6	16.8	17.3	27.1	2.1
g. From a friend or acquaintance	15.2	32.0	29.0	23.2	0.6
h. A family member	19.1	23.0	28.5	28.3	1.1
i. School or College Courses	17.8	18.7	19.3	42.5	1.7

18. Out of the list of information sources we just read, which one source is your single most important source of information about the courts?

Your local newspaper	34.0
Materials available from the court	2.0
Radio news	8.0
Television news	38.6
Television shows such as L.A. Law or Law & Order	1.0
The O.J. Simpson trial	1.7
From a friend or acquaintance	3.0
A family member	3.5
School or College Courses	4.4
DK/REF	3.9

19. How often are you interested enough in a specific case to follow its progress -- often, sometimes, rarely or never?

Often	22.7
Sometimes	44.6
Rarely	24.9
Never	7.6
DK/REF	0.2

20. (*If Interested in Q19*) Can you recall a specific case that you have followed closely?

Yes	75.7
No	23.9
DK/REF	0.4

20a. (If yes to Q20) Could you please specify the most recent case you followed?

O.J. Simpson	48.2
Other National	12.7
Anna Marie Emery	5.7
Misc. Case	10.8
Personal/Friend/Family	4.0
Other Local Cases	8.8
Misc. -- Crime Only	9.9

22. From your home, about how long would it take you to get to your local courthouse? (In minutes)

1-5 Minutes	24.5
6-10 Minutes	26.8
11-20 Minutes	33.9
> 20 Minutes	13.4
DK/REF	1.4

23. On a scale from 1-5, where 1 is not at all acceptable and 5 is very acceptable, how acceptable is that distance?

1 Not at all acceptable	3.1
2	2.5
3	7.2
4	10.0
5 Very Acceptable	75.3
DK/REF	0.5

24. Have you been to a courthouse in Iowa to use court services in the past three years?

Yes	46.6
No	53.4

25. Have you ever sought legal ADVICE?

Yes	66.5
No	33.3

25a. (If yes to Q25) Was it from a private attorney, Legal Aid Services, or someone else?

Private Attorney	93.6
Legal Aid Services	3.6
Someone Else	2.8
DK/REF	—

26. Have you ever attended a court proceeding in Iowa for any reason?

Yes	54.5
No	45.3

26a. (If yes to Q26; If no to Q26, skip to Q31) How many times have you attended a court proceeding?

1-2 Times	58.3
3-4 Times	19.4
5 or More	22.3

26b. How long ago was your most recent court experience of any type?

0-6 months	16.7
6 months to 1 year	11.0
1 to 2 years	13.5
3 to 4 years	16.9
5 or more years	41.3
DK/REF	0.7

26c. At your most recent court experience, in what capacity did you serve?

Juror	30.1
Witness	18.9
Counsel	0.7
Party Civil Case	11.6
Defendant	9.8
Visitor	17.6
Other	10.3
DK/REF	0.9

26d. Please describe the nature of the case being decided.

Family Law	17.8
Traffic	17.6
Small Claims	5.5
Civil	15.8
Criminal	25.3
Juvenile	1.4
Other	8.9
DK/REF	7.8

26e. How satisfied were you with the outcome or decision? Very satisfied, somewhat satisfied, not very satisfied, or not at all satisfied?

Very satisfied	43.8
Somewhat satisfied	26.7
Not very satisfied	8.0
Not at all satisfied	12.6
DK/REF	8.9

26g. To what extent do you think the outcome or decision of the court case in which you were involved was fair--a great deal, somewhat, very little, or not at all?

A great deal	46.3
Somewhat	29.2
Very little	5.5
Not at all	9.8
DK/REF	9.1

- 26h. Regardless of the outcome, to what extent do you think the procedures operating in court were fair -- a great deal, somewhat, very little or not at all?

A great deal	47.5
Somewhat	35.6
Very little	4.6
Not at all	4.1
DK/REF	8.2

31. When people have a dispute, there are ways of resolving the dispute without going to court. One of those ways is through mediation, which involves a neutral third party who works with both sides to help them fashion their own solution to the dispute. Another way is through arbitration, in which a neutral third party hears both sides of the dispute and renders a judgment. If you were faced with resolving a dispute outside the courts, which method would you prefer, mediation, arbitration, or wouldn't it make any difference?

Mediation	44.6
Arbitration	17.9
It wouldn't make any difference	34.2
DK/REF	4.5

- 31a. (If Mediation to Q31) Would you rather use mediation to resolve your dispute or would you rather have the courts resolve your dispute?

I'd Rather Use Mediation	82.7
I'd Rather have the courts resolve my dispute	10.3
DK/REF	7.0

- 31b. *(If Arbitration to Q31)* Would you rather use arbitration to resolve your dispute or would you rather have the courts resolve your dispute?

I'd Rather Use Arbitration	66.9
I'd Rather have the courts resolve my dispute	21.4
DK/REF	11.7

- 31c. *(If No Difference to Q31)* Would you rather use mediation/arbitration to resolve your dispute or the court system to resolve your dispute?

I'd Rather Use Mediation/ Arbitration	64.4
I'd Rather have the courts resolve my dispute	23.3
DK/REF	12.4

- 31d. Summary Measure for Q31a-c, where respondent would rather use some type of ADR or the court system to resolve a dispute.

ADR	81.2
Courts	18.8

32. Should alternative means of dispute resolution be part of the Iowa court system or should they be handled by some private agency outside the court system?

Part of the Iowa court system	56.8
Handled by outside private agency	30.4
DK/REF	12.8

33. Should alternative means to resolve disputes outside the courts be paid for by the justice system or by those parties involved in the dispute?

Paid for by the justice system	12.1
Paid for by the parties to the dispute	80.6
DK/REF	7.3

34. Have you ever been involved in any mediation or arbitration?

Yes, mediation	7.1
Yes, arbitration	6.0
Yes, both	3.0
No	83.3
DK/REF	0.6

34a. Were you satisfied or dissatisfied with the outcome?

Satisfied	73.6
Dissatisfied	19.4
DK/REF	7.0

35. In what year were you born? (Note: Responses converted to age)

18-37	33.5
38-54	33.2
55 and older	33.2

36. Are you married, widowed, single, living with a partner but not married, or divorced?

Married	64.5
Widowed	8.2
Single, never married	13.7
Living with a partner	4.2
Divorced	9.2
DK/REFUSED	0.1

37. We would like to know if you are working now, or are you unemployed, retired, a homemaker, a student, or what?

Working now	62.8
Unemployed	2.0
Retired	20.0
Disabled	1.9
Homemaker	8.0
Student	5.2
DK/REF	0.1

39. In general, when it comes to politics, people often consider themselves liberal, conservative, or moderate. Using a 7 point scale, where 1 is extremely liberal, 7 is extremely conservative, and 4 is the middle or moderate position, where would you place yourself on this scale? You can use any number between 1 and 7.

1	2.2
2	3.1
3	8.8
4	46.3
5	18.4
6	12.1
7	7.0
DK/REF	2.0

41. Many people are often not able to vote in an election because of illness, family obligations, or maybe they just didn't have enough time. What about you, did you vote in the 1994 general elections in Iowa?

Yes	70.9
No	28.5
DK/REF	0.6

42. What is the highest grade of school or year of college you have completed?

1st grade	0.4
2nd grade	0.2
3rd grade	0.0
4th grade	0.4
5th grade	0.0
6th grade	0.0
7th grade	0.2
8th grade	3.0
9th grade	0.9
10th grade	1.6
11th grade	2.2
12th grade	36.2
1 yr. college	14.2
2 yrs. college	12.6
3 yrs. college	3.7
4-plus yrs. coll.	23.8
DK/REF	0.5

42a. (For Non-High School graduates only) Did you get a high school diploma/pass a high school equivalency test?

Yes	20.8
No	79.2
DK/REF	0.0

42b. What is the highest degree that you have earned?

Bachelor's	19.3
Master's	4.8
Ph.D.	0.4
Professional	4.4
None	68.4
DK/REF	2.7

43. Would you say the area in which you live is a big city, a small city, a suburb, a small town, or rural area?

Big City	14.7
Small City	25.8
Suburb	6.2
Small Town	36.2
Rural Area	16.8
DK/REF	0.2

46. How long have you lived in Iowa?

0-30 Years	35.9
31-47 Years	31.8
48 Years or More	32.4

47. When it comes to government and politics, generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an Independent, or what?

Republican	31.3
Democrat	27.4
Indep/No pref.	36.5
Other	1.7
DK/REF	3.1

48. Is your religious preference Protestant, Catholic, Jewish, or something else?

Protestant	52.1
Catholic	24.0
Jewish	0.5
Other	18.2
None	3.9
DK/REF	1.4

50. Do you typically have interactions with the legal system through your job?

Yes	15.4
No	83.7
DK/REF	0.9

51. Do you have any close friends or relatives who work in the legal system, that is as a lawyer, clerk, police officer, or in some related occupation?

Yes	45.1
No	54.7
DK/REF	0.2

49. Have you ever been a juror?

Yes	24.2
No	75.7
DK/REF	0.1

52. Are you employed by the federal, state or local government?

Yes	13.6
No	86.1
DK/REF	0.4

53. We would like to know the general range of your family income, that is the family living with you, for 1994 before taxes. This figure should include salaries, wages, pensions, dividends, interest, and all other income.

Less than \$10,000	5.0
Exactly \$10,000	2.0
Between \$10-20,000	12.7
Exactly \$20,000	2.5
Between \$20-30,000	12.3
Exactly \$30,000	4.2
Between \$30-40,000	14.8
Exactly \$40,000	2.5
Between \$40-50,000	8.6
Exactly \$50,000	2.6
Between \$50-60,000	5.4
Exactly \$60,000	1.5
> \$60,000	11.3
DK/REF	14.6

54. Would you mind telling me your race?

White	95.1
African-American	1.4
Hispanic-American	1.1
American-Indian	0.5
Asian-American	0.7
DK/REF	1.1

55. What is your gender?

Male	47.7
Female	52.3

